

# **S.H.S. RECOMMENDED READING**

## **Stories of Survival**

***Winterdance*** by Gary Paulsen (NONFICTION)

In this true story, the author presents an unforgettable account of his participation in the 1,100 mile-long dogsled race called the "Iditarod." For 17 days, Paulsen and his team of dogs endured blinding wind, snowstorms, moose attacks, and more – yet relentlessly pushed on to the end.

***Kiss the Dust*** by Elizabeth Laird

Her father's involvement with the Kurdish resistance movement in Iraq forces 13-year-old Tara to flee with her family over the border into Iran, where they face an unknown future.

***Briar Rose*** by Jane Yolen

Grandmother Gemma always told the story of Briar Rose, and after she dies, her granddaughter discovers that Gemma was a real-life Sleeping Beauty – a Holocaust survivor.

***In the Heart of the Sea*** by Nathaniel Philbrick (NONFICTION)

Philbrick recounts the 1820 sinking of the whale ship Essex by an enraged sperm whale and how a crew of young men survived against impossible odds. This is the true story behind the legendary whale of Herman Melville's classic novel, *Moby Dick*.

***The Color Purple*** by Alice Walker

The lives of two sisters – Nettie, a missionary in Africa and Celie, a Southern woman married to a man she hates – are revealed in a series of letters exchanged over thirty years.

***Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex*** by Nathaniel Philbrick (NONFICTION)

An easier version of Philbrick's *In The Heart of the Sea* (see above).

## **Sports**

***Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream*** by H. G. Bissinger (NONFICTION)

Football is very big in Texas. Follow the highs and lows as the residents of Odessa support their hometown team.

***Ironman*** (or any title) by Chris Crutcher

Suspended from the football team for what he called the coach, Bo now must attend an early morning anger management class. It's just hard to rein in that anger when a college kid beats you up physically and your dad does the same verbally.

***It's Not About the Bike*** by Lance Armstrong (NONFICTION)

The multiple winner of the Tour de France tells his story of training for the bike race and the race for his life against cancer.

***In These Girls, Hope is a Muscle*** by Madelaine Blais (NONFICTION)

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist tells the story of a high school girls' basketball team's championship season and their fierce, funny sisterhood-is-powerful quest for excellence.

***Shoeless Joe*** by W.P. Kinsella

A baseball field in the middle of an Iowa cornfield is the setting for this book about dreams, magic, and life.

***The Contender*** by Robert Lipsyte

A Harlem high school dropout escapes from a gang of punks into a boxing gym, where he learns that being a contender is hard and often discouraging work, but that you don't know anything until you try.

***The Natural*** by Bernard Malamud

Gifted baseball player Roy Hobbs, his career derailed by a youthful indiscretion, makes a stunning comeback in later life, but finds himself still struggling against the temptations that would bring him to ruin..

***Education of a Coach*** by David Halberstam (NONFICTION)

Bill Belichick coaches differently than anyone else in the NFL. Halberstam writes a very readable story of the game and one of the most successful coaches in sports history.

***Women Who Win: Female Athletes on Being the Best*** edited by Lisa Taggart (NONFICTION)

Examines the lives and accomplishments of ten women athletes, including beach volleyball player Misty May-Treanor, jockey Julie Krone, and distance swimmer Lynne Cox.

***Ultimate sports: Short Stories by Outstanding Writer for Young Adults*** edited by Donald R. Gallo

Sixteen stories covering a variety of sports by talented, well-known authors.

## Overcoming Obstacles

***The Lovely Bones*** by Alice Sebold

Susie Salmon, murdered at age fourteen, watches from heaven as her family and friends struggle to make sense of their lives without her. A poignant and ultimately life-affirming story.

***The Secret Life of Bees*** by Susan Monk Kidd

Fourteen-year-old Lily Owen is on the run with her motherly nanny Rosaleen, fleeing both Lily's abusive father and the police who battered Rosaleen for defending her new right to vote.

***Prom*** by Laurie Halse Anderson

Ashley Hannigan's plans for the future don't include the senior prom; they include things like squeaking through to graduate, moving out of her parents' crowded house and into a Philadelphia apartment with her high school dropout boyfriend. Those plans change when Miss Crane, the math teacher, embezzles all the prom money. Before she can say, "Too weird," Ashley finds herself choreographing a school gala that changes everything

***Monster*** by Walter Dean Myers

In a combination of film script and journal, sixteen-year-old Steve tells his story about being accused of felony murder. The prosecution call him a "monster" – but is he?

***My Sister's Keeper*** by Jodi Picoult

All her life, thirteen-year-old Anna has donated platelets, blood, and bone marrow to lengthen her sister's life – until she hires a lawyer for a medical emancipation lawsuit to give her control over her body.

***Fat Kid Rules the World*** by K. L. Going

A chance encounter with a homeless punk rocker rescues obese seventeen-year-old Troy Billings from himself when he convinces Troy to be the drummer in his band. This engaging story is full of many unexpected twists and turns, including the horrifying and hysterical description of Troy's first gig.

***A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*** by Dave Eggers (NONFICTION)

A memoir in which the author, barely out of college, discusses the unrelated deaths of his parents within months of one another, and tells how he came to take responsibility for his eight-year-old brother, while also working to create the satirical magazine "Might."

***Rules of Survival*** by Nancy Werlin

In this novel, seventeen-year-old Matthew recounts his attempts, starting at a young age, to free himself and his sisters from the grips of his emotionally and physically abusive mother.

***Where the Heart Is*** by Billie Letts

Seventeen-year-old Novalee Nation is stranded by her no-good boyfriend in a Wal-Mart parking lot in Oklahoma. Pregnant and with only \$7.77, the deeply caring people of this small town take Novalee into their hearts and homes.

## Real People (ALL NONFICTION)

***Hole in My Life*** by Jack Gantos

The author relates how, as a young adult, he became a drug user and smuggler, was arrested, did time in prison, and eventually went to college, all the while hoping to become a writer. He writes the popular children's series, *Rotten Ralph*.

***Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*** by Alfred Lansing

Provides an account of the voyage undertaken by polar explorer Ernest Shackleton and his crew aboard the *Endurance* in 1914-15.

***Nicked and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*** by Barbara Ehrenreich

The author relates her experiences from 1998 to 2000, during which time she joined the ranks of the working poor as a waitress, hotel housekeeper, cleaning woman, nursing home aide, and Wal-Mart clerk to see for herself how America's "unskilled" workers are able to survive on only \$6 or \$7 an hour.

***Seabiscuit*** by Laura Hillenbrand

Describes how three men worked together to turn a rough-hewn, undersized horse into one of the fastest horses in racing history.

***Girl, Interrupted*** by Susanna Kaysen

The author describes her two-year stay at a psychiatric hospital renowned for its famous clientele and for its progressive methods of treatment.

***Of Beetles and Angels: A Boy's Remarkable Journey from a Refugee Camp to Harvard*** by Mawi Asgedom

The author tells his story of how, at the age of three, he fled civil war in Ethiopia by walking with his mother and brother to a Sudanese refugee camp, and later moved to Chicago and earned a full scholarship to Harvard University.

### Real People (continued)

***Eleven Seconds*** by Travis Roy

Roy recounts how his life has changed since a freak accident in 1995 in his first Boston University hockey game that left him paralyzed from the neck down.

***Tuesdays With Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man and Life's Greatest Lesson*** by Mitch Albom

Chicago news reporter, Albom, returns to Massachusetts to visit and discuss life with his Brandeis professor, Morris Schwatz, who is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease.

### Out Of This World

***Feed*** by M. T. Anderson

In a future when most people have computer implants in their heads to control their environment, a boy meets an unusual girl who is in trouble.

***Ender's Game*** by Orson Scott Card

"Aliens have attacked Earth twice and almost destroyed the human species. To make sure humans win the next encounter, the world government has taken to breeding military geniuses and training them in the arts of war. All of these "games" are won by Ender Wiggin. He's smart enough to know time is running out. But is he smart enough to save the planet?" (New York Times)

***A Handmaid's Tale*** by Margaret Atwood

Set in the near future, America has become a puritanical theocracy and Offred tells her story as a Handmaid under the new social order whose function is to breed.

***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** by Douglas Adams

Seconds before Earth is destroyed to make room for a galactic freeway, a young man is rescued by an alien fiend who whisks him away on a space-traveling adventure.

***Sphere*** (or any title) by Michael Crichton

A group of American scientists descend to the ocean floor to investigate a spaceship of phenomenal dimensions, apparently undamaged by its fall, and three hundred years old.

***The Martian Chronicles*** by Ray Bradbury

The first Earth people to attempt the colonization of Mars try to build their new world in the image of the civilization they left behind.

***The Once and Future King*** by T. H. White

Tells the story of the youth and reign of King Arthur, the establishment of the Round Table, and the search for the Holy Grail.

***Cat's Cradle*** by Kurt Vonnegut

Vonnegut writes a satire and fantasy about the end of the world. Filled with a strange and humorous cast of characters, this is a commentary on modern man and his madness.

### Mystery & Suspense

***The Hound of the Baskervilles*** by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Famous detective Sherlock Holmes investigates the tale of a hound that haunts the lonely moors around the Baskervilles' ancestral home.

***Rebecca*** by Daphne DuMaurier

For months after her death, the memory of Rebecca de Winter continues to dominate everyone at her former home, Manderley, one of the most famous English country homes.

***People of Darkness*** (or any title) by Tony Hillerman

Sergeant Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police is asked to investigate the theft of a box of keepsakes belonging to the "People of Darkness." Then people associated with the keepsakes begin dying mysteriously and a hired assassin is stalking Chee.

***The Widening Gyre*** (or any Spenser title) by Robert B. Parker

Spenser is hired by Senate candidate Meade Alexander after he is blackmailed by the mob. Spenser must get back a tape of Alexander's wife that is X-rated and could mean the end of Meade Alexander's short political career.

***Little Drummer Girl*** (or any title) by John LeCarre

Israeli intelligence agents are secretly pursued by an exceptionally dangerous and elusive Palestinian terrorist leader.

***Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*** by Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone is fifteen and has Asperger's, a form of autism. He knows a great deal about math and every little about human beings. When he finds his neighbor's dog murdered, he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his world upside down when he decides to find the murderer.

### Mystery and Suspense (continued)

***Black Mirror*** by Nancy Werlin

Convinced her brother's death was murder rather than suicide sixteen-year-old Frances begins her own investigation into suspicious students activities at her boarding school.

### Historical Fiction

***The Things They Carried*** by Tim O'Brien

This book is a collection of short stories about a platoon of young soldiers caught up in the madness of the Vietnam War.

***Fallen Angels*** by Walter Dean Myers

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

***Memoirs of a Geisha*** by Arthur Golden

Nitta Sayuri, a young Japanese woman who was taken from her home at the age of nine and sold into slavery as a geisha, discovers a rare opportunity for freedom when the outbreak of World War II forces an end to the only life she has ever known.

***A Northern Light*** by Jennifer Donnelly

Sixteen-year old Mattie, determined to attend college and become a writer against the wishes of her father and boyfriend takes a job at a hotel in 1906, where the death of a guest renews her determination to live her own life.

***Exodus*** by Leon Uris

The founding of the new nation of Israel is vividly portrayed in this novel about an American nurse and a young Israeli freedom fighter.

***House of the Spirits*** by Isabel Allende

Presents a novel set in an unnamed Latin America country and describes the struggles, passions and secrets of the Trueba family that spans three generations.

### Classics

***Pride and Prejudice*** by Jane Austen

In this light-hearted novel, Austen mocks the conventions of "Gothic Romances" with their impossibly perfect heroines and unnatural events. With its enchanting heroine, it reads like a modern day soap opera.

***Great Expectations*** by Charles Dickens

Pip is elevated from his humble life by an unknown benefactor. His great expectations are dashed, however, when he finds out who has been helping him.

***On the Road*** by Jack Kerouac

Presents a thinly fictionalized autobiography of Kerouac's cross-country adventure across North America on a quest for self-knowledge.

***Fahrenheit 451*** by Ray Bradbury

A story set in the future about a society which would not allow books to exist.

***Jane Eyre*** by Charlotte Bronte

Orphan Jane becomes a governess in a mysterious household and falls in love with its equally mysterious master, Mr. Rochester.

***Invisible Man*** by Ralph Ellison

A black man struggles during the depression not only with the white man but with members of his own race.

***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*** by Ken Kesey

The story of a man whose rebelliousness pits him against the head nurse of the mental ward and the full spectrum of institutional repression.

***The Bell Jar*** by Sylvia Plath

No longer able to cope with her feelings of inferiority, Esther, a talented college junior, suffers a mental breakdown. Sylvia Plath chronicles her own life struggles as a talented young writer in this autobiographical novel which remains one of the best-told tales of a woman's descent into insanity.

***A Prayer for Owen Meany*** by John Irving

Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes -- accurately -- he is an instrument of God and is destined for martyrdom.

